

Dearing (J. H.)

# ANNUAL ADDRESS

BEFORE THE

## NORFOLK DISTRICT MEDICAL SOCIETY,

MAY 14, 1878.

SOME OF THE MINOR DUTIES OF THE  
MEDICAL PROFESSION TO THE  
PUBLIC AND TO EACH OTHER.

BY T. H. DEARING, M. D.,  
OF BRAINTREE.



WEYMOUTH GAZETTE PRESS: C. G. EASTERBROOK, PR.  
1878.



# ANNUAL ADDRESS

BEFORE THE

## NORFOLK DISTRICT MEDICAL SOCIETY,

MAY 14, 1878.

---

*SOME OF THE MINOR DUTIES OF THE  
MEDICAL PROFESSION TO THE  
PUBLIC AND TO EACH OTHER.*

---

BY T. H. DEARING, M. D.,  
OF BRAINTREE.

---

WEYMOUTH GAZETTE PRESS: C. G. EASTERBROOK, PR.  
1878.





## A D D R E S S .

*Mr. President and Fellows of the Norfolk County Medical Society :*

Perhaps no better picture of the life and conditions of a nation has ever been given us than is found in the pages of the Iliad. Here, three thousand years ago, we have in the ten long years of war upon the windy plains of Troy, a glimpse of the medicine and surgery of that day. Here we discover that at that early day our profession had in its ranks personages of commanding influence and great integrity,—those who cared for the welfare of the state and the longevity of mankind, as well as for healing individual cases, routine practice.

Idomeneus, when calling upon Nestor to carry the wounded Machaon from the battle-field, declares to the old king that

“A wise physician, skilled in wounds to heal,  
Is more than armies to the public weal.”

And though Patroclus skillfully drew the deadly dart from the side of the wounded Ulysses, he regretted that he could not be attended by the regular surgeons, the sons of the divine Esculapius. And, too, Homer intimates that in the first great battle there was not a little of *irregular* practice as well as *unprofessional usage*. Also we must conclude that among the gods and heroes of that age only the simplest forms of the healing art were known. This is shown, and a touch of comedy included, in the lines representing the cure and the treatment of Mars by the divinity Pæon.

Nor was there wanting a touch of “Spiritualism.” Severe injuries were direct manifestations of displeased gods, and sacred deities were ever winging their downy flights to the stricken ones. So the practice was considerably mixed: the ethics and skill of our profession were very imperfect.

How much has our profession improved since that time, as a profession? Bacon says, “I hold every man a debtor to his *profession*, from the which, as men do seek to receive countenance and profit, so ought they of duty to endeavor themselves, by way of amends, to be a help and ornament thereunto.” Not in an address of an hour, nor in a thousand paged octavo, could be

recounted and examined the advances it has made. Still we are not perfect, nor up to the standard we should be, I fear. Therefore I purpose to take this occasion to call the attention of our society to some matters of omission and commission, and trust, though what I say is out of the ordinary line of papers for the day, that my brethren will take no offence.

Mr. President, theologians say "The little foxes spoil the vines." In the light of nearly twenty-five years observation as student and practitioner, I ask your attention to a few thoughts, suggestions, reminders,—call them what you will,—as to the mischief of the little foxes in our medical patch; or, if you please, to some of the minor individual duties of the members of our Society, as well as in regard to associate, or those of the Society as a whole; and as to whether greater regard to these may not more fully secure to us the respect and confidence of the public.

In the first place, I presume we all shall agree that to insure the highest degree of success in any calling, there should be no act of commission or omission which, in the least degree, upon fair consideration, would impair the confidence of the public or that of the actor in himself, or of actors among themselves, whether it relate to ability or integrity.

Secondly, in the truest sense I believe "Success is a duty." Often it happens, I know, that one performs his duty, and because the end sought is not secured the superficial observer calls the act a failure. Yet the actor was, or should be considered, successful. He did all that any man of his profession could possibly do, and in the best manner; but there were other powers, forces at work which he could in no way control nor even comprehend.

It is not my intention, at this time, to call your attention to the latter class of duties, any further than to intimate that in my judgment the times demand that the graduate of our profession shall have been most thoroughly prepared for the degree by his preliminary and professional training, and that a three years professional course is insufficient; and that we who have become somewhat rusty and indolent must wake up to the importance of new life and thorough study in first principles, as taught today.

I am more inclined to discuss some of the minor duties, the most obvious, general, social, ethical, &c., such as should give color and beauty to our professional foliage, because in every direction the Medical Colleges are demanding that which tends to insure the performance of the second class, while the first seems to

be largely overlooked and greatly hindering our success.

Now, Mr. President and gentlemen, First, the people will have respect for our profession if they see we are individually and collectively attending to our business, studious and mindful of the public health. Second, the more nearly we can work in harmony the *greater* will be the respect for and confidence in our profession. *Are* we so acting in these matters as to meet the just expectations of the public?

As to the first proposition; viz., "The people will respect us according to our labors," let me say that we all know and gratefully acknowledge that some of our members are, and have been hard working students and practitioners, and an honor to us, locally and abroad; but can all of us claim such recognition? Can we claim even that in our every day routine, work, we endeavor to leave nothing undone which would benefit the patient and ensure our success?

Then in regard to *public* matters coming within the range of our profession, how is it? What do we know of, how thoroughly studied up are we, as to drainage, sewage, wells, ventilation, the hygienic condition generally of our several towns? As to stimulants, diet, the art of prolonging life, the sanitary needs of our schools?

For a few minutes let us consider *some of the duties of the profession to the public.*

As to this matter, it is refreshing to look back thirty years, to the time when the code of the American Medical Association was adopted, and realize that our fathers' comprehension of their duties, as a profession, to the public, was as full and clear, and their opinions in the matter as emphatic, as the wisest of our generation. Be patient while I read an article of the code upon this subject.

"As good citizens, it is the duty of physicians to be ever vigilant for the welfare of the community, and to bear their part in sustaining its institutions and burdens. They should also be ever ready to give counsel to the public in relation to matters especially appertaining to their profession, as on subjects of medical police, public hygiene and legal medicine. It is their province to enlighten the public in regard to \* \* \* location, arrangement and dietaries of hospitals, asylums, schools, prisons and similar institutions—in relation to drainage, ventilation, &c., and in regard to measures for the prevention of epidemic and contagious diseases."

Now if there was need of urging upon our profession at that time, these duties, how much more need of recognizing the obligation to attend to them, in our day;—a time when villages are rapidly growing all over our state and nation; when these villages and cities are being beautified with costly, magnificent edifices for residences, business, schools, churches, &c., which very buildings, if improperly constructed, become pest and charnel houses; when buildings are so crowded upon each other that suitable soil, healthy springs and soils for wells, can scarcely be found; when genius in the manufacture of conveniences, appliances, scarce halts to know whether these fixtures are more in the direction of maintaining and promoting health than in destroying it; when capitalists, to fill their pockets, proclaim the beauties and excellencies of their village lots, though they know poisonous gases lie thickly imbedded in the very soil.

The physician should be *authority* in regard to the healthfulness or unhealthfulness of his town, and all parts of it. He should thoroughly understand its topography, that he may give right information as to what districts may be used for dwellings and other buildings, and what avoided, till the ponds, streams and soil be properly prepared for building near to or upon. He should know the soil, drainage, climate, &c., that his opinion may be of value as to *what* improvement, if any is necessary, can be made to have it a healthy location.

How many of our Society can tell us whether their towns occupy thin or deep, warm or cold, moist or dry soils? whether clay or other sub-soil, and the depth, so that the people may know whether to expect dry or wet cellars? How many have made themselves acquainted with the natural drainage of and know the necessary artificial drainage for their towns, so important to their healthfulness? If at such an institution as that at South Boston for the Idiotic and Feeble Minded, the matter of drainage was till last year overlooked, it is not altogether improbable that it has been neglected by our profession in their several localities.

How many can tell us whether their towns are exposed to or protected from sea breezes, or to what winds they are exposed, and whether they bring moist or dry air and sudden changes of temperature? How many of us know whether the *water* of our towns be pure or impure as a whole, and so whether the people using it are especially exposed to fevers, dysenteries, palsies, nephritic and other diseases? whether there is anything in the soil and sub-soils

and their structure, to prevent contamination from any and all sources, so whether privies and cesspools may safely be built within fifty feet of wells? One able writer has stated that *pure* wells are the exception, and hundreds every year are poisoned by the foul water of wells. And, gentlemen, the question of drainage and sewerage is rapidly coming upon us.

The physician should not only be authority in regard to the location of dwellings, school-houses, factories and the like, but as to their ventilation, light, water supply and pipes, (especially as to school seating),—and all that pertains to their healthfulness. It will not answer for him to be longer ignorant in regard to these matters.

The absolute necessity to human health and life of God's first and greatest gift to mankind, *light*, is acknowledged by all who have considered the subject. The light of the sun does, indeed, ofttimes seem "to feed the human body," and so strengthen and purify that it compels scrofula and all of its brood to take flight; while in the darkness of narrow streets and avenues, windowless houses, dark kitchens and other rooms, the inhabitants become blanched and sickly, the beautiful hues of the human cheek are wanting, and in it, diseases, like bats, gather and fatten.

And so in regard to *air*, health cannot be maintained without it. Do you say, that's a common place statement enough, what idiot does not know it? But is it not the practice to exclude it from all rooms and assemblages, especially from the sick room? An able writer of our profession said, "Man lives more upon air than upon meat and drink." If these statements are true, can we magnify the danger of living and sleeping in dark and unventilated, 7 x 9 rooms? If the French rule, 2000 cubic feet per hour for each person, (and the English 4000,) indicates only a fair amount of air for the maintenance of health, what splendid crops of disease we may expect from those rooms which hold but a thousand feet of air, and have the doors and windows and every crevice of them closed the livelong night. How many of us have done our whole duty in *this* matter, and warned the builders and occupants of such cells that hundreds of them will perish every year prematurely—that the infants by thousands will wither away like the soilless flower?

In close connection with light and air come food and drink. And among the drink progeny comes that sly and troublesome fox with a long name, *intoxicating beverages*. If it be true that the legitimate fruits of dram drinking are drunkenness and crime;

that more than two-thirds of all crime is due to the habitual use of intoxicating beverages, as our court records indicate ; that, as many of our best, most impartial authorities state, such use of these beverages is, under all circumstances, injurious rather than beneficial, to persons in health ; that to call them food is of doubtful propriety, possibly a “terrible misnomer,” an “abuse of language,” then men of such commanding influence in communities as those of our profession *ought* to exert their whole influence against the cause of such degradation and crime, as well as to sharpen their wits to find a *less dangerous food*. If it be true, or if it be probable, even, that these liquors disturb the nutritive processes of the system, especially of the brain ; that they are the cause of a large share of insanity, and that idiocy, as well as scrofula, consumption and other maladies, are the legitimate inheritance of the drinker’s offspring, then, till our profession takes some decisive action to crush the monster, which I verily believe it is able to do, we had better unfurl to the public a black bordered flag, and let it wave in the misty breeze, till by the stars of medical science it shall bleach to purest white.

And on that more strictly medical ground, its use in fevers, consumption and other diseases, we may all wish it were *such* a stimulant, or tonic, that we could say with Edmunds, “there is no more reason against using a stimulant when a man is low and faint than there is against poking a fire, or putting the blower up if likely to go out.” Yet when we consider that it is by no means settled that these beverages are better in such diseases than other remedies ; that it is not desirable to give remedies which disguise the symptoms ; that it is possible they should be used more as narcotics than as stimulants, it becomes our profession to adopt no medical dogma in their favor, mistaking it for medical science. Rather let us with candor investigate, observe, critically note their action, while we use them with the utmost discrimination, dreading to make ourselves the evil genii of our patients, and anxiously hope for a substitute that will prove certain in the renewal of life, and never lead to its destruction. Here let me ask every member to read, at his earliest convenience, the resolutions passed by the Mass. Medical Society in 1827, upon this subject. The first resolution, however, I will read, viz. : “That in the opinion of this Society the constant use of ardent spirits is not a source of strength and vigor, but that it is generally productive of sickness and disease.”

Then in regard to *food*, proper diet, suppose today a friend and patron meets us and says, "for two years my boy has been unwilling to eat any meat except pork; how will this affect his health, growth and hardiness?" We answer, "Well, a little pork with baked beans is good diet, and Boston like, but guess he had better eat something else. To tell you the truth, though, we've neither read much upon the subject of proper diet, nor given it much consideration." Suppose, too, a citizen asks some of us if we can tell him "whether the water in his well is suitable for drink and culinary purposes?" We answer that "we have given but little attention to chemistry, and would not like to take the responsibility of deciding." Another asks us to examine his premises,—his house, cellar, water closets, &c.; he would like our opinion as to their hygienic condition. We answer, "Well, really, no attention was given to this matter when we studied our profession, and we've had but little taste for such study, so should not consider our opinion worth much: you'd better ask Dr. Bowditch, or some member of the State Board of Health." Wouldn't these persons feel much as Prof. Stevens, of New York city did, when examining a student for a medical degree? After putting many questions and receiving chiefly for answer, "Well, I don't know," and "I never met with that," the old Professor ripped out, in his classic language, "What in hell have you met with? you'd better start anew and *meet with something* before you meet me again!"

Closely following the above questions is another as to the *Influence of the present courses and methods of study in our High Schools and Academies upon misses of fourteen to eighteen years of age.*

We think it cannot be denied that many of the misses who graduate at these schools with the highest honors, and those who for several years applied themselves most closely to their studies, though not attaining the highest rank, found themselves in precarious health, and a large per cent have faded away and died. Investigation should be made as to the cause of this. Is it in the condition of the rooms, ventilation, seating, &c.? is it in the constant attendance, through thick and thin, in all weathers, regardless of sexual condition? is it in the over study and cramming process and merciless examinations, or what?

Is it true that at stated times nature makes a great demand upon the energies of early womanhood, and that at these times great caution must be exercised, lest injury be done? Is it true that nature compels compliance with its laws, or to pay the penalty?

that to be overworked or even moderately worked, at certain times, whether by poring over books or tramping through wet and snow, tends to break down the nervous system and to impair the whole system?

If these are truisms then let us examine their relation to the hot-house processes going on in our schools. And let me add, the hot-house, forcing, processes prevailing in *all grades* of schools, in most places, especially the larger places, demands the careful watch and consideration of our profession, in regard to the number of hours as well as the number of studies.

Here is a field in which, if we can fix and shed positive light, so as to guide our educators, our profession will be entitled to increased influence, whether it gets it or not. It is true the physician has a great work at the bedside, but if he causes that to be done which will make calls to the bedside unnecessary—(what of his pay, do you ask)—does he not do a greater work? Has not the time gone by when the physician could ignore the causes of disease and be satisfied with sick-room work?

Our current literature largely consists of inquiries as to the *cause* and *prevention* of disease, and this literature emanates from the best minds of the medical world. Much of this knowledge is of the most useful kind, and such as every town and most persons of every town ought to have the benefit of. Can the physician do his town or community better service than give it the benefit of his reading, thoughts and conclusions upon these subjects? By his personal influence and advice the laws of health might become available to every family.

We have glanced at a few items of individual *public* duty; let us look at one or two more nearly connected with and affecting our daily, *routine* duties.

First, as to the *non-admission of callers to the sick-room*. I know that often it seems cruel to say to the sick one or to the friends, "No callers must be admitted"; yet I believe we often err in being too easy in the matter. Of course, in some families it makes no difference what our restrictions are in regard to it. We expect as many of the neighborhood will crowd into the room as comfortably can, and at all hours, and until the last breath is drawn, if that should be the result. In others they would regard our directions and keep out the gossipers, if a little warm, gentle breath were sufficient; but as it would take a regular shower bath of cold words to be effective, they havn't the courage to apply it.

Now I am strongly of the opinion that this babel of visiting tongues is a sword which cuts unfavorably in two ways; first, against the welfare of the patient; second, against the interest of the physician and profession. Such crowds of visitors usually are *meddlers*, and a large proportion of them are ignorant, though no statement or argument of the physician could convince them they are not the wisest and most competent judges. They are not content with prescribing and pouring down their decoctions in the absence of the physician, but often are very ready to enter upon a severe criticism of the treatment and to express their opinions of it and the doctor, with great assurance and spirit—resulting, frequently, in change to quacks and loss of life.

Probably no absolute rule can be laid down for the isolation of sick members of a family and non-admission of callers; yet it is a difficulty which checkers and lessens the influence of our profession. Perhaps a dignified and firm direction not to allow any discussion whatever in the sick-room, nor to admit any but those in attendance and the members of the family when prudent, together with polite and steady resistance to being drawn into promiscuous discussion of the case, though always ready to listen to and follow any proper suggestion, would be as prudent a course as any.

Another fox! one of the most mischievous of the lot, though we cannot do without him. He presents himself in all the colors of the rainbow, and one would think him a delightful companion, or appetizer. I allude to our *Materia Medica*, especially to our *chemicals*. They look elegantly in the chemist's or apothecary's windows and cases, and one might conclude the stomach would be delighted to take in an indefinite quantity; but some of them no sooner touch the palate than the stomach, yea, the whole man, rejects the delusive and villainous mess, and would thank God if it had been deposited in the dock with the revolutionary tea. To swallow a large proportion of the doses directed for disease, or that we prepare for our patients, does indeed require extraordinary courage and perseverance. Think of it! from that elegant machine greaser, castor oil, to the pleasant intestinal irrigator, croton oil; from *sal ammoniac* to the recent sal and pharyngeal cauterizer, salicylic acid!

And another beautiful phase of the matter is, speaking, perhaps, a little figuratively, that nearly every member of the profession has his own specific for every disease,—the thousand of our Massa-

chusetts Society, multiplied by the thousand diseases, making a string of a million remedies for the little Massachusetts patch of the world ! Is it not time that we say to our medical chemists and pharmaceutists, &c., "We acknowledge the discoveries you have made in medicines, and the many improvements as to the forms for administering them, and that many of the new remedies enable us to treat successfully some diseases which baffled our fathers ; still we think you had better not continue to flood us with new and perhaps detestable remedies, but spend a good share of your time in so remodeling the useful of those we have that they can be taken with comparative comfort ; that they shall no longer be a source of distress to our patients, and if you can, so improve them thát the sick will be as willing to take them as they have been desirous of avoiding them.

Sometimes when I flatter myself that I have covered up, or ordered, a badly tasting drug in a nicely tasting vehicle, and the apothecary, shaking it up, says "this makes an elegant mixture," and I see it sent off to the patient with feelings of pleasure and triumph that I have prescribed something which will smoothly slide down the æsophagus and give delightful impressions to the outer as well as inner man, what is my surprise the next day, on being interrogated as to that "*terrible stuff*" I ordered, and an opinion expressed that "you never took a dose of it!" On tasting, I confess I should never want to take a dose of it! Have any of my brethren ever tried their doses upon themselves? I had occasion to once, and may the good Lord save me from anything further in that direction, till they become more palatable. If physiologists, biologists, and others of our profession, together with chemists and pharmaceutists; will only be determined in this matter, in the right direction, it need not long be the bane of our practice. There can be no doubt that the disagreeable and unsightly doses of our school have driven many of our patrons into other styles of practice, in which they have given more attention to this matter than we. Many of those who leave us on this account are very far from being the ignorant and poor, and 'tis worse than folly for us to shut our eyes to these facts. The more palatable our medicines are, the more elegant in appearance and the more easily administered, the more popular the regular practice will become.

One item as to individual labor, in the direction of *studying particular diseases*.

Would not a treble benefit accrue, if country practitioners should give special attention to certain branches or diseases? benefit to the people, benefit to the profession, to every member so engaged. The poorer, the mass of patients, cannot afford to pay the city specialist, and the city specialist of skill, reputation and any considerable practice near home, cannot be *expected* to leave and go far away, without receiving a large fee. One of the other class of specialists,—he who dabbles in and claims to know everything in regard to *all diseases*, whose business is so light that he can well afford to go any distance for comparatively small fee, whatever he can get,—gives indifferent satisfaction to the attending physician how muchsoever his *ipse dixit* may affect the patient and friends. I do not say that at present such a class is not useful, perhaps necessary.

Every member of a club or society might take up a different disease or class of diseases and keep up investigation of the same for years, till he should become authority, an expert on the subject. Perhaps those of us who are showing crow marks will hardly care to move in any new direction, but is there not here a clear and inviting field for the more youthful? Our professional studies may indeed include the whole circumference, still can we not strengthen a particular arc? All may succeed, "but they who succeed best will be specialists and more."

This leads me to ask, would it not tend to closer study, more thorough investigation of medical and surgical subjects, were our Society divided into sections or standing committees, to which such subjects might be referred? For instance, let there be a section which shall have in charge all inquiries into, investigation of, new remedies and appliances; another section in charge of microscopy and chemical examination of morbid matter, urine, &c.; one of acute chest diseases, another of chronic; one of hygienics, another upon fractures and dislocations, and so on. No member of a section need be precluded from work outside his section, though he ought to feel under obligation to do what he might to make his section's work worthy of his section and our Society. But any member having matter which naturally belongs to a section other than his own, should be willing to assign it, receiving due credit for the same.

As a matter of pleasure, interest, information, courtesy and fellowship, the officers of our Society, or a committee, might visit neighboring societies, and at stated times make brief reports of

such visits,—reporting any extraordinary or important matter or proceedings that they might have observed, or that their attention had been called to in other societies, and that they might think would be of special interest to us. To become somewhat acquainted with professional brethren outside of our usual circle would certainly be pleasant, and could hardly fail to create an interest in each other and each other's work, as well as to strengthen the bonds of fellowship between the societies. And as different persons and bodies often treat the same subject very differently, discussing different phases and using different appliances, it would hardly be possible to observe and examine the work of others without benefit.

We have glanced at foxes in the public park, and marked two or three in our own fields ; now let us see what can be found in our reception rooms.

Is it not the fact that the public has increased or lessened confidence in individuals and associations, according as it sees the individual and association exhibit confidence in themselves ? And if it were possible that no word of insinuation, detraction or vituperation, could be uttered against one another, in our profession, beyond the absolute facts, not even retailing or expressing, unnecessarily, detrimental facts, would not the confidence of our patrons be increased many per cent by this alone ? What, next to the ability promptly and skillfully to perform whatever called upon to do, would so strengthen us in the eyes of the people as to stand in serried ranks, shoulder to shoulder, every fellow ready to help his fellow, firmly determined to act as one man ?

In these times, when there are so many isms and ists hacking at and into our profession, misleading many of the best citizens in every community, piling up in the drug and other stores not only infinitesimal doses, but balms, cordials and other patent medicines, by the ton, is not the *policy*, as well as *duty*, forced upon us to work together ? Suppose this condition of things,—a courteous, warm hearted, frank and generous bearing, one toward another, in private and in public; in the same locality real friendliness, even intimacy, occasionally dropping into one another's office, every day comparisons of each other's views on important medical subjects, who would be the loser by it ? Would not such a course so unify the regular practice that the public could not fail to have increased confidence in us and our art ? Would it not form a

moral bulwark between us and such irregulars as see nothing outside their supreme selfishness and the almighty dollar?

Such a course would not indeed bring us all to the same level, whether it be a higher or lower ; it could not equalize all talent or tact, or education, or perception or judgment ; nor could it bring to the same standard the manners and qualities of speech, of all, but it might so favorably modify these that they would, all in their places, fitted to each other, help to make up the Amazon of a noble profession. I do not mean to say that these conditions are wholly wanting among us ; my proposition simply is that if we should give more attention to such matters it would be better for us individually, as a profession, and add infinitely to the comfort, if not health of our patrons.

It is not for me to say that there is less professional honor and courtesy in our own than in other professions,—the bar, clergy, teachers, editors, nay, even politics. Members of these sometimes use each other roughly, and occasionally use very harsh language towards each other ; but is it not the fact in their case that 'tis occasionally, and that generally it is outspoken, not covertly and persistently done, and upon slight pretext and provocation? Nor can we say that in these professions they seek and avail themselves of every opportunity to malign, abuse each other.

In their intercourse with *patients* the members of our profession are the equal in honorable conduct of the best of any profession, but are there not members of our societies who have far wider reputation for indulging in personal abuse of their fellows than for their professional skill? How often we hear the proposition from some brother to place the toe of his boot so forcibly against the glutems maximus of a neighboring brother as to ensure quite an echrymosis, possibly prove a ready vessicant. How often 'tis the case that the *consultor*, before he leaves the consultee, will say something to the family of the sick which shows plainly his intention to override the attendant and give himself extra importance ; possibly assuming to give some direction wholly outside of the consultation, or making an extraordinary display of some medical appliance or surgical instrument. And not unfrequently this occurs when it was by mere tolerance that he came into the case at all.

How often is it the case that though there be a conventional agreement as the result of consultation, yet, upon the prying into, ante-room, out-door questions of some restless member of the

family, or some friend, the consultant expresses himself in such doubtful language as to the course pursued by the attending physician, or, worse still, in slightly masked language he gives opinions that will most surely result in the case being put into his hands. True, such a course often results in injury to him who practices it, but this does not wholly mend the matter.

In such a course is involved *character*, and no man of perfect honor and real courtesy will indulge in such tricks, while he who does, habitually, will gradually fall into worse professional habits, lose largely his self-respect and more largely public respect, whatever may be thought of his ability. Nor does the evil end here. His neighbor physician soon discovers the recreancy of his consultant, will meet him as seldom as possible, and so, perhaps, the patient lose an improved treatment, the attendant some valuable suggestion, and the trickster more or less fees with his honor.

Another phase of consultations which tends to lessen confidence in our profession is that when the expert, or consultor, is or puts on the airs of a rough and bully; so conceited that he puts himself outside all ethical codes and scarce condescends to courtesies common among gentlemen; with bluster taking occasion to give his opinion before the assembled household and as many busy-bodies as may be congregated, in manner most offensive to the consultee and without previous conference with him. The sharpest recompense in such cases is the wrecks of their false diagnoses scattered all along the years of the practice; for I know of no class of practitioners whose opinions are less to be relied on. And it is chiefly through some social, abnormal or *unprofessional* quality, that they have secured a footing in the sick-room. One would think such physicians never read sections 2, 7 and 10, art. 4, of the National Code, nor consider themselves bound by the rules of *any* of our societies. Neither do they seem to recognize the statement in section 1 of the same article, that "in consultations the good of the patient is the sole object in view"; but are willing to becloud the good of the patient and the whole transaction with their nebulous selves. Should there not be a rule, and unflinchingly applied, justifying refusal to meet in consultation one who is known and read of all men as rude, ungentlemanly and professionally discourteous towards his brethren? And so long as there are those who by nature or education are gentlemen, as well as distinguished physicians and surgeons, ought we not to bestow

our favors upon *them* and seek *their* counsel? Let us show that if 'twere true in Byron's time, as he sings,

"Society is now one polished horde,  
Formed of two mighty tribes, the *bones* and the Lored,"  
in our time we can add a couplet, and state that

Society itself has so bestirred  
That courtesy and honor form tribe third.

If the reason be properly stated to our patients, not many of them will long require us to meet with the coarse or arrogant.

Do not these little, one sided and mean usurpations and tricks mildew our vines? Do not such acts lessen respect for each other? and if so, how much greater is the loss of respect on the part of the laity. That there *is* lack of confidence and respect for our profession is in part shown by the immense patronage of patent medicines and the lowest forms of quackery. It is not for a moment to be supposed we shall be wholly delivered from the medical blusterer, but when we so plainly see that the practices above mentioned tend to belittle us, lead to discourtesy, rudeness and false estimates of one another, heedlessness of section 2, article 5th, of the National Code, lessen public confidence in the mass of our profession, nay, in the profession itself, I ask, again, is it not incumbent on us to make a strong effort to rise above it?

One other item, a very small fox, but his teeth are sharp and sometimes they wound deeply. He makes the public uneasy and suspicious, and shakes their confidence in us: it is the criticizing and captious manner in which we speak of one another to the people. How many of us are willing to answer inquirers, what we know in our hearts to be true,—“yes, he is an honorable man; yes, he stands as well in the profession as any of us,” and when there is extraordinary ability and skill shown, admit it. On the contrary, are we not too apt to so frame our answers as to give the impression that our neighbor is not quite up to *our* height; that he stands a little lower, professionally, just a *leetle*, it may be, and on the whole they had better put their cases into our hands? perhaps venture a little further and use language that would imply distrust, if it did not really belittle. Does not this course impress the public as springing from unjustifiable rivalry, and so shrink their confidence in our integrity, and then in our ability?

It may be well enough for me to say that personally, so far as I know, I have but little to complain of in regard to these matters; I have not been subjected to an undue share of such incivilities. The consultants, and the neighboring practitioners who meet me, have usually been gentlemanly and considerate. Nor do I know that the members of our Society are particularly faulty in these respects. But report and considerable observation in both city and country, convince me these evils do exist, and I consider it within the tenor of my remarks to call attention to them.

An additional item, a step outside of our exclusive territory into the common field, induces me to declare that courtesy to the extent of civility should not be withheld from those practitioners in our neighborhoods who are not of our faith and school. Be they men or women, if the public recognize them as honorable citizens, it is no part of our duty to put them under such ban as will, so far as we can, uncitizenize them. We are not obliged to court their favors, nor to put ourselves out of the way to show them professional courtesies, yet we should meet them upon the street, socially, as we would other citizens against whom we have no grudge. We do no less than this towards a large part of those we daily meet, and in whose strict integrity we have but little confidence. To pursue a more severe course towards them, in our day, is to offensively condemn the judgment and choice of many of our most intelligent neighbors, show a lack of the spirit and liberalism of the age, possibly show a selfishness which the people are quick to perceive, and which will surely react to our injury. None the less, however, is it our duty to show, in a firm and courteous manner, our disapprobation of all trickery and hypocrisy.

In conclusion, let us imagine a physician, intelligent, studious, thoroughly informed in his business, exercising constant vigilance to preserve, for individual and the general good, the great essentials of health; careful that physical and mental comforts shall not be endangered by any harmful thing which his advice can improve or cause to be removed; kind-hearted, courteous, and of spotless honor, would he not counterpart the poet's ideal man, who had

“ Knowledge great,  
Prudence, wisdom, vigilance and strength.  
To guard all force or guile,  
And crowned  
The king of all,  
With royal honor and with glory crowned,  
The lord of all, majestic walked,  
With godlike countenance sublime, and form  
Of lofty, towering strength.”  
Rejoicing in the health of his race.

Mr. President, and gentlemen of the Norfolk District Medical Society, may we so conduct ourselves towards each other, our patrons and all with whom we have to do, that when the balance sheets are made up we all shall have a good array of figures in our favor, showing that we intelligently, carefully and honorably cultivated our vineyards. Aye, may it appear that we have so availed ourselves of every opportunity for great professional achievement and on all occasions have been so mindful of the *little graces* and courtesies of daily intercourse, and the *little foxes* have so slightly injured our vines that not only grand harvests of gold and happiness will be realized here, but, at last, gentle, fragrant breezes shall waft us to meet the bands which yearly have gone before ;— those who

“ \* \* \* in airy robes  
Of bliss, now weave the sacred bower of rose  
And myrtle shade.”

and the little band which this year has departed, now

“ \* \* \* sitting near the tree of life,  
In robes of linen flowing white and clean,”

Our brothers

EBENEZER P. BURGESS,  
JONATHAN WARE,  
JOHN P. SPOONER,  
SIMEON I. TUCKER.

Then, may all, on the everlasting hills of paradise roam,

“ \* \* \* \* on the right hand of bliss!  
Sublime in glory.”





